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ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2230
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS IMMEDIATE
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI PRIORITY 4941
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0503
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 8463
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2229
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 5057
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 4375
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1470
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0843
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0949
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM 0852
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 0986
RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN 2164
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 5301
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 000789

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [KDEM](#) [KPAO](#) [TH](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: MFA PREPARES THAI PM FOR FIRST TRIP TO BURMA

REF: A. A. JAKARTA 373 GAMBARI OUTLINES STRATEGY

[1](#)B. B. BANGKOK 714 PM A/S HILL DISCUSS BURMA

[1](#)C. C. BANGKOK 715 FM A/S DISCUSS BURMA

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Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission James F. Entwistle, reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) Thailand was considering a more pro-active approach to Burma as it prepared for PM Samak's March 14 visit to Nay Pyi Taw, stated MFA Director for East Asian Affairs Kallayana Vipattipumiprates in a March 6 lunch with visiting EAP/MLS Office Director Robert Rapson. Kallayana explained that in addition to Indonesia's proposal of a regional subgroup on Burma (ref A), PM Samak has contemplated options for playing a leading role in Burma's democratic transition. Kallayana described an assembly of East Asian countries that would invite Burma's leadership to Bangkok for discussions about stability and political development in Burma. In addition, the PM planned to discuss with senior Burmese officials a bilateral investment guarantee agreement. Rapson encouraged the Thai to avoid any high-profile bilateral economic initiatives with the Burmese at this time. He also noted that the Indonesian proposal or any similar parallel initiative by Thailand ran the risk of undercutting current efforts led by the UN and those of the international community to bring about change in Burma. Kallayana conceded that this latest proposal may not be effective, but short of international observers to Burma's referendum or even a delay of the referendum, there existed few alternatives to addressing

Burma's political stalemate. End Summary.

SAME PROPOSAL, DIFFERENT NAME

12. (C) Kallayana stated that he was in the process of preparing for PM Samak's upcoming visit to Burma on March 14.

In general, the RTG planned to encourage Burma to stick to their announced timeline for the referendum of the constitution and subsequent elections. But Thailand also prepared to stress the importance of Burma's moving in a direction that would be acceptable to ASEAN and the larger international community. This meant that the results of the referendum and the election could not be a fait accompli, but needed to include widespread dialogue and transparent participation among all political actors.

13. (C) Kallayana had no specific ideas as to how the Thais would back up their message, and stated that Thailand did not want to put the Burmese on the defensive. According to Kallayana's colleagues at the Thai mission to the UN in New York, UN Special Envoy for Burma Ibrahim Gambari would present Indonesia's proposal for a regional subgroup on Burma when Gambari traveled to Burma March 6-9. While neither the GOI or Gambari had formally approached Thailand about this approach, Kallayana understood that the group would include Thailand. Thailand would be supportive of the subgroup if it facilitated direct consultations with Burma's top leaders.

14. (C) In addition to Indonesia's proposal, Thailand had considered the possibility of RTG leadership in Burma's democratic transition independent of the GOI proposal. Samak envisioned a role that was stronger than Gambari's actions to date, but perhaps not as forceful as what the USG would consider necessary. Though the RTG had yet to finalize

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anything, this idea would expand on the GOI proposal to include more countries in the region but would exclude the U.S. and other Western powers. By limiting participation to Burma's neighbors, Kallayana believed that this would increase the comfort level of the Burmese. An Asia-only subgrouping would be less confrontational than one that included outside leaders. In Kallayana's view, the key factors that would bring the junta leadership to the table were confidentiality and positive reinforcement of any steps forward, even if the junta's actions did not meet the expectations of the international community.

15. (C) Rapson cautioned Kallayana that the Thai and/or the Indonesian proposed initiatives with the Burmese ran the risk of diluting Gambari's mission and the international community's efforts to bring about change in Burma. Rapson also suggested that Thailand avoid any high profile, bilateral economic initiatives with the Burmese at this time (e.g., a bilateral investment guarantee that PM Samak is reportedly considering for the trip) for the same reasons. The Burmese generals would latch on to the offer as condoning their actions, and then continue with business as usual, believing they effectively put the demands of the international community behind them. Kallayana replied that there was very little else to do with the Burmese; they were unlikely to accept ideas such as UN monitors for or postponement of their upcoming constitutional referendum in order to make the process more credible. Thailand wanted to offer an alternative to Gambari. While Rapson generally concurred with Kallayana's assessment of the difficulties of leveraging the Burmese generals, he made it clear that it would be important for the international community, including key regional players, to maintain pressure on the regime to institute democratic reforms. He also noted that the U.S. would be wary of any regional process on Burma that excluded the U.S.

COMMENT

¶6. (C) Kallayana's description of Thailand's latest thoughts on a revised Burma strategy are slightly different than that outlined by PM Samak and FM Noppadon during February 29 meetings with A/S Hill. (ref B and C) It is not clear to us if top RTG officials approve of Kallayana's proposal or if Kallayana was just sounding us out as he prepares for Samak's first trip to Burma as Thai PM. But we believe that Thailand's next policy steps will be ironed out between now and then. It appears that Samak is interested in making public Thailand's interest in leading a regional initiative, despite Kallayana's claims that Burmese officials prefer confidentiality in their political dealings. At the same

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time, local press reports indicate that while visiting Than Shwe, Samak will also announce Thailand's new business investment plans for Burma. This may lead some to question the motivation between Thailand's newly professed commitment to taking a leading role in Burma's democratic transition.
End Comment.

¶7. (U) EAP/MLS Director Rapson cleared this cable.

JOHN